

Legislative Updates of interest for Higher Education

Week of Feb. 11 – Feb. 15, 2008

Budget Update –

The House Ways and Means Budget Proviso Subcommittee met during the week. Of note, the subcommittee adopted a proviso relating to the need-based grant program. The proviso states: *“Need-based grant funds for public institutions must be allocated using a methodology that considers state resident Pell Grant recipients such that each public institution shall receive an amount sufficient to provide a similar level of support per state resident Pell recipient when compared to tuition and required fees. However, no public institution shall receive less funding than would be provided under the methodology used in FY 2007-08.”* This proviso would enable the allocation methodology of need-based funds for public colleges and universities to be changed from one based on full-time enrollment to one based on the distribution of the state’s neediest students. Further, the proviso protects public colleges and universities from getting less funding than would be indicated under the current methodology for the allocation of funds in FY 2008-09. Allocations of need-based grant funding for independent institutions are not affected by this proviso. Recommended provisos from the subcommittee will be considered by the Full Ways & Means Committee which meets next week to take up the budget and proviso recommendations of the subcommittees. The House will likely take up the budget the week of March 10th.

In the House –

On Thursday, the House amended and gave second reading to [H.4494](#), relating to the Centers of Economic Excellence Act. The bill removes stated funding limitations and timelines; deletes obsolete language relating to the matching requirement with private or federal funds, and codifies program policies relating to the use of non-state matching funds to pay for initial operating costs and the acceptance of cash equivalent and in-kind donations from non-state sources. Recommended Ways & Means Committee amendments were adopted. These amendments would require the annual program report to be provided to the General Assembly in addition to the Budget and Control Board and would encourage collaboration with other colleges and universities. Additionally, a floor amendment was adopted that would ensure funding of the state-supported scholarship programs before endowment appropriations was adopted. This latter amendment essentially codifies what has been the practice of the General Assembly in regard to the funding of scholarships. The bill received third reading on Friday and was sent to the Senate.

In the Senate –

On Wednesday, the Senate Education Committee met. Dr. Garrison Walters, Executive Director of CHE, and Mr. Daniel Ravenel, Vice-chair of CHE and Chair of the Higher Education Study Committee, made a presentation to Senate Education on higher education and on the work of the Higher Education Study Committee which has been working since September 2007. A copy of the presentation is available on CHE’s website at http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/Legisl/SenateEducationHandoutFINAL_021308.pdf. Additional information on the Higher Education Study Committee is available at <http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/HiEdStudyComm.htm>. The Committee voted to recommend favorably to the Senate the re-appointment of Mr. Kenneth Wingate to a Governor’s At Large seat on the Commission on Higher Education (CHE). (The Senate approved Mr. Wingate’s appointment on Thursday.) The Committee also took up several bills and voted to report out as amended two bills that had been advanced by the Higher Education Subcommittee of the Committee: [S.909](#), which provides free tuition for certain eligible members of the SC National Guard or Reserve Components that are awarded a bronze star medal or higher military award, and [S.950](#), which relates to Denmark Technical College Area Commission.

Other –

The House and Senate voted to override the Governor’s veto of [H.3379](#) (relating to Palmetto Fellows and LIFE programs and the calculation of the high school rank for S.C. resident students who have attended high school out-of-state). The bill codifies a budget proviso that has been in effect.

Reminder: The above report is not intended to be all inclusive. Bill numbers are linked to the SC General Assembly page. The link should go to the most recent version of the bill. For additional information on legislation referenced above and other legislation relating to higher education, see http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/Legisl/HigherEd_Legis_List.xls. Detailed information on the 2008 Session of the General Assembly may be access at www.scstatehouse.net or from links included on CHE’s website at <http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/LegislativeSession08.htm>.